

The Incomparable Christ
Psalm 102/Hebrews 1
December 17, 2000
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Hebrews 1:1-12 "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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Sometimes "word-association" games are fun.

I'll say a word and you say the next word that comes to your mind:

Shopping - tired
Pencil – work
Refrigerator – diet
Gymnasium – pain
(Kind of a negative perspective on life)

Let me try another one:

Jesus – gentle, loving, Lord, baby, resurrection, prophet, good man?

At least in the Western world people have heard the name Jesus and it conjures up associations.

Most people have some opinion as to what the name stands for.

But unfortunately for most the name doesn't evoke strong feelings.

Non-Christians treat the name as that of an innocuous, harmless religious holy man out of antiquity.

Christians for the most part treat the name with benign neglect – a kindly over-familiarity built on a caricature.

"Jesus, oh, yes, of course, Jesus. You know – God's son, born in a manger, preached and healed a long time ago, died for the world and went to heaven – Jesus."

But if rightly understood, the name Jesus would evoke strong feelings, either the most terrifying word a person will ever hear or the most comforting.

For as we see him clearly for who he is, truly is, then our heads and hearts will awaken to feel strongly about him.

I want you today to see him in all his majesty.

Most of us have no difficulty believing in the humanity of Jesus.

That he was a real human being we accept.

He ate, slept, talked, had genuine emotions, and suffered pain and that leads us to conclude easily that he was human.

Those are actions and feelings with which we can identify.

That he was God, we mentally assent to but find harder to comprehend.

That is understandable, because, in deity, we're dealing with categories that are beyond us.

They are outside of our experience.

For example: Knowledge we understand but omniscience (all-knowledge) we don't.

Accepting Jesus' humanity is one thing but accepting his deity is more difficult.

Those who lived near Jesus when he was on earth had that same difficulty.

- The Samaritan woman at the well said, come see the man who knew all the things I have ever done – Is this the messiah?
- When Jesus calmed the storm his disciples said what kind of man is this?
- When Jesus told the disciples where to catch fish – Peter was so overawed that he could only manage a weak “depart from me for I am a sinful man.”

These men and women were getting glimpses of something that they couldn't put into focus.

Jesus was obviously a man but he was doing and saying things that were like – like God.

When glimpses of his deity shone through his humanity, the disciples were awestruck.

The classic example is the disciple Thomas.

After Jesus' resurrection Thomas hadn't seen him as the other disciples had.

Together behind locked doors the disciples including Thomas gathered and Jesus suddenly appeared – something no purely human being could do.

And he when Thomas saw his nail-imprinted hands and spear-pierced side, his heart saw what his eyes couldn't, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!”

With the benefit of hindsight we say of course he was God.

But when we say that so quickly I'm afraid we also say it lightly or even vainly, without proper understanding of what it means.

Why were the disciples awestruck?

Because their concept of God was so high – so filled with superlative content that when it got through to their minds that that is who they were talking to, that that is who stood in their presence, they were dumbfounded.

This man is God!

What did they mean?

Please turn to Hebrews chapter 1.

V 10 "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth..."

Using the Psalms, the author of Hebrews uses a poetic statement to talk about what? – The creation of the physical world.

Please notice **who** is doing the talking at this point:

Hebrews 1:1 "In the past **God** spoke..."

Hebrews 1:5 "For to which of the angels did **God** ever say,

Hebrews 1:6 "And again, when **God**... says...,

Hebrews 1:8 "But about the Son **he** says..."

God the Father is speaking and who is he talking about?

V8 the Son.

Now in verses 10 and back in verse 2, who does the Father say created the heavens and earth?

Hebrews 1:2 "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."

John said it this way,

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made."

Paul said it this way in Colossians 1:16 "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

Since Jesus created the heavens and the earth –what does that say about his existence before the manger in Bethlehem?

As most children know – he didn't begin in Bethlehem, he was before. And not in the way that some jokingly or not jokingly say, "in my past life" – No, there is no past life for us, we begin at conception but there was definitely a past life for Jesus.

That's what the disciples began to glimpse:

This Jesus is not only a man he is also the eternally existent God.

Jesus had told them he existed before Bethlehem.

In John 6:38 he said, "For I have come down from heaven..."

And in John 16:28 he added, "I came from the Father and entered the world..."

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus existed before he was born on this earth but it teaches more than that about him.

Not only was Jesus there before the beginning but according to verse 12 **he will always be** – Jesus is the eternal God – without beginning and without end.

The Father said of the Son, "You remain the same, and your years will never end."

As a kid, did you ever lie on a lawn at night looking into the stars and try to imagine eternity – how long it must be?

Here's the way Jesus said it about himself in John 8:57-58:

After claiming to have known Abraham, the religious leaders said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old...and you have seen Abraham!"

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

The leaders took up stones to kill him because they knew he was saying something about himself that was true **only** of God.

Jesus had pronounced his eternal existence.

Jesus claimed to be the very same one who appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

Moses had said, "Who shall I say sent me and what shall I say is his name?"

God said, "I am who I am – that is who's sending you.

Here before the religious leaders Jesus is claiming to be that same "I am" person – God himself.

Jesus was saying to the leaders in John's day exactly what he was saying to Moses in his day, "Time does not apply to me."

"I am not bound by time." "I am eternal."

Asking how old is Jesus is like asking "How high is blue?"

Height and color are two separate categories.

Age and Jesus are two separate categories.

Age is a function of time and Jesus is eternal.

Time does not limit him, he limits time.

Jesus/God is infinite.

With him, in one sense, all time is present.

While he ordered that events and history would occur in particular order and in time - he created that time and sequence but he is greater than time.

He is in complete control of all time, past, present and future.

Our future is not open to chance because the eternal Jesus is already there.

No wonder the disciples marveled – this Jesus they talked to was the God who has always been.

In Luke 24:27 after the resurrection, Jesus walked with two men on the road to the city of Emmaus.

They sat together at dinner and Jesus taught them about himself from what we know as the Old Testament Scriptures.

He opened the Bible and showed them how he was there in all of those days.

- Genesis 16:7 Jesus came to Hagar.
- Genesis 18:1 Jesus was one of the three visitors
- Genesis 22:2 Jesus was at the offering of Isaac.
- Genesis 32 Jesus wrestled with Jacob
- Joshua 5 Jesus appeared to Joshua
- Judges 6 Jesus appeared to Gideon
- Daniel 3 Jesus appeared as the fourth man in fiery furnace.

Jesus is creator and he is eternal.

Imagine sitting one day just looking at him and it beginning to dawn on you who you were looking at.

This person who I can see was there with Daniel, Joshua, Moses and Abraham.

This person was there before time began.

But when we go back to Hebrews 1:10 we see another emphasis – we see his power.

Hebrews 1:10 "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands."

Remembering that Jesus is the creator of everything, look how Isaiah describes him in Isaiah 40:12

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket,
or weighed the mountains on the scales
and the hills in a balance? Jesus has!

**Stand on Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain national park or
sit atop one of the San Juan mountains and look out across the
vastness of those peaks and valleys and realize that Jesus made
it all. See the power of Jesus!**

Consider the nations of the world:

15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.
17 Before him all the nations are as nothing;
they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.

See the power of Jesus

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
and its people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

See the power of Jesus.

Consider the world's greatest leaders and military powers.

Think of Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Mao Tse Tung.

Do we really think that it is these men and others who
determine the course of history?

See the power of Jesus:

23 He brings princes to naught
and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted,
no sooner are they sown,
no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

25 "To whom will you compare me?
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

Nothing makes me more quickly realize my finitude, my smallness in the grand universe than to stand in the mountains at night and see the shear immensity of the sky.

26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one,
and calls them each by name.
Because of his great power and mighty strength,
not one of them is missing.

See the power of Jesus!

The all powerful, eternally existent, creator-Jesus is the one who controls my world and my destiny – and yours.

Look again to Hebrews 1:10-12

"In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.
You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end."

Not only is he the eternally existing, powerful creator God but he never changes.

If anything seems permanent to us it is the earth.

After a particularly turbulent airplane flight nothing feels quite as good as finally landing on good ol' terra firma.

But then nothing is quite as unsettling as standing on good ol' terra firma and have it move as in an earthquake.

We know that that earth is changing and one day will be totally changed by the very same Jesus who made it in the first place.

But in contrast Jesus never changes.

What Jesus has always been he will always be.

His character will not change.

His truth will not change.

His ways will not change

His purposes will not change.

Balaam the prophet captured it well:

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie,
nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act?

Does he promise and not fulfill?"

This Jesus, in whom we say we believe, is none other than the eternally existent, unchangeable, powerful, creator-God.

Lastly look with me at Psalm 139.

This Jesus is Omniscient.

O LORD, you have searched me
and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue
you know it completely, O LORD.

You hem me in--behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

He knows everything.

He knows every truth, even the ones yet undiscovered by mankind.

He knows every event before it happens.
He knows every thought before we think it.
He has all knowledge so that every judgment is wise – there are no surprises for Jesus.

Look at verses 7-12

Where can I go from your Spirit?
 Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
 if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
 if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
 your right hand will hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
 and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
 the night will shine like the day,
 for darkness is as light to you.

This Jesus is everywhere by his Spiirt.
He was, before there was time and space.
He is the one who made time and space.
There is no place where he is not and all at the same time.
That is why He can promise to be with us everywhere and anywhere until the end of time.

Who is Jesus?

 He is the eternally existing one.
 He is the all-powerful creator.
 He is the unchanging God.
 He is all-knowing wisdom.
 He is without limitation and he is here.

NO wonder Thomas was awestruck – My Lord and My God.

There are two anxieties that dominate the lives of thinking men and women who don't trust in Jesus:

 One is the anxiety over their unchangeable past – guilt.
 The other is the anxiety over their unpredictable future.

The Apostle Peter quoting Isaiah spoke of it this way:

I Peter 1:24 "All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall..."

No wonder people are anxious about the future.

They know Peter is right.

All human life is like withering grass, and even the best of life is like the flower – it eventually withers and dies.

What peace can be found in things that always deteriorate?

There is no comfort in forever saying goodbye to things and to the people we love.

No wonder people are weary of life, grow to hate it and cry out about the frailty of it.

But Peter said there is something else.

Yes, "All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall..."
but the word of the Lord stands forever."

What we do not have in ourselves – we may have in him.

While in and of ourselves, we are death.

He is life.

While we are changing,
He does not change.

While we are puny and subject to the powers around us.
He is all powerful.

Jesus said,

John 6:40 "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life."

And the Apostle Paul echoed it in Romans 10:9

"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

He who has Jesus has life, because he is life.

How big is your Jesus?
Do you see him and believe him in all his majesty?
Do you trust him?

Isaiah 40:27-28

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and complain, O Israel,
"My way is hidden from the LORD;
my cause is disregarded by my God"?

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can fathom.

Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.