

Lutheran Confessions

17. Luther on the Ecumenical Creeds

...For God dwells in a 'light which no man can approach unto,' 1 Tim. 6, 16. **He must come to us, yet hidden in the lantern,** and as it is written, John 1, 18:

'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **He hath declared Him,**' and as Moses said before this, Ex. 33: 'There shall no man see Me [God] and live.' ” (St. L. 10, 1007; E. 23, 568.)

Formula of Concord, SD, II, 10

Accordingly, **the Scriptures flatly call natural man in spiritual and divine things darkness,** Eph. 5, 8, Acts 26, 18. John 1, 5: *The light shineth in darkness* (that is, in the dark, blind world, which does not know or regard God), *and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* Likewise, the Scriptures teach that man in sins is not only weak and sick, but defunct and entirely dead, Eph. 2, 1. 5; Col. 2, 13.

Formula of Concord, SD, VII, 36

...just as the expression, *Verbum caro factum est, The Word was made flesh* [John 1, 14], is repeated and explained by the equivalent expressions: *The Word dwelt among us*; likewise [Col. 2, 9]: *In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*; likewise [Acts 10, 38]: *God was with Him*; likewise [2 Cor. 5, 19]: *God was in Christ*, and the like; namely, that the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but the two natures, unchanged, are personally united. [These phrases repeat and declare the expression of John, above mentioned, namely, that **by the incarnation the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but that the two natures without confusion are personally united.**]

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

O Antiphons

Between December 17 and 23, the church begins to anticipate the coming of Christ's Mass. In the daily Vespers service, the seasonal antiphons for the canticle

the Magnificat is replaced with 7 different antiphons. These antiphons are all addressed to different names for our Lord and thus they all begin with the interjection, "O." The hymn, "Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel" is based on these antiphons.

December 21-- O Dayspring, splendor of light ever- / lasting;*

Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.
(*Luke 1:78-79*)

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

Grant, we implore You, heavenly Father, that the new birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free, who are held in the old bondage under the yoke of our sin; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

AMEN (*Collect for Christ's Mass Day*)

Word of God: St John 1:1-18 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

1. What do the words, "In the beginning..." bring to mind? Gen 1:1, Heb 1:3
2. Jesus is called "the Word" (ὁ λόγος=logos). What do we learn about Jesus' relation to creation? See Gen 1:3, "God said...;" Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the LORD..." and Hebrews 11:3. Especially 1 Peter 1:23
3. Jesus is called "the Light of men." (John 8:12, 2 Cor 4:6)
4. Why didn't the world know Him? (1 Cor 2:14, Eph 2:1, 1 Cor 12:3)
5. Why did God send John (the Baptist)? (1:6-8, 15, 10:41)
6. With verse 12, those who believed "received" Him and became "sons of God." How did these people come to believe(v.7, Eph 2:8-9, Heb 2:14)?
7. How were they "born" (again)? Final answer at end of verse 13. (2 Thes 2:14, Rom 10:17.)
8. What three things are excluded as causes of salvation?
 1. not of blood.—not being born a Jew or Lutheran or whatever
 2. not of will of flesh.—not a personal decision for Jesus
 3. not of will of man.—not the will of another upon you (2 Peter 1:21)
9. What is "grace for grace?" (v. 16) Then verse 17 has "grace" again.
10. The Word becomes the Incarnate(in the flesh) Word(v.14). How do we speak about Jesus' human nature? (1 Tim 3:16, Col 2:9,
11. "made his dwelling(tented)" among us. Also used in Ex 40:34-38 for the OT tabernacle in which God's glory shone. Also Rev 21:3.
12. Jesus is the Only-begotten. How do we speak about His divine nature? 1John 5:20 "He is the true God and eternal life."
13. There is a three-fold difference between the Law and the Gospel in John 1:17.
14. "No man has seen God." Therefore, how do we know (about) God? Jesus has declared Him. (John 8:55, John 10:15)

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn "**O Jesus Christ, All Praise to Thee**"

Holy Baptism, Part One and Two
John 1:14

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ,
King who comes to save us." p.225

Reading

St. John 1:1-18 (back)

Hymn

"**O Jesus Christ, All Praise to Thee**"
(Augustana Service #5, insert)

Catechesis on... (back)

St. John 1:1-18
Liturgy
Catechism

+ Antiphon for Dec. 21(p.289)

+ Magnificat p.228-230
(*antiphon repeated*)

+ Prayers p.231-235

Kyrie
Lord's Prayer
Salutation
Collect of the Day
Other Prayers
Prayers
At Vespers
In the Evening
For Peace
Benedicamus
Benediction

Catechesis on St. John 1:1-18

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" ¹⁶ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

Two Natures of Jesus

"Also they teach that *the Word*, that is, *the Son of God*, did assume *the human nature* in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and

the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man..." (AC II, 1-2).

Salvation by Faith(believing in Jesus)

"Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4 (AC IV, 1-3).

Faith is not a Decision for Jesus

"But God cannot be treated with, God cannot be apprehended, except through the Word. Accordingly, justification occurs through the Word, just as Paul says, Rom. 1, 16: *The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*. Likewise 10, 17: *Faith cometh by hearing*. And proof can be derived even from this that faith justifies, because, **if justification occurs only through the Word, and the Word is apprehended only by faith, it follows that faith justifies. 68]** But there are other and more important reasons. We have said these things thus far in order that we might show the mode of regeneration, and that the nature of faith [what is, or is not, faith], concerning which we speak, might be understood" (Ap IV, 67-68)

Moses' Law versus Jesus' Grace and Truth

"But if the Law and the Gospel, likewise also **Moses himself [as] a teacher of the Law and Christ as a preacher of the Gospel are contrasted with one another**, we believe, teach, and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but comforts consciences against the terrors of the Law, points alone to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the lovely preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit" (FC Ep V, 7).

Picture: <http://lostseed.com/extras/free-graphics/images/jesus-pictures-2/baby-jesus.php>

Catechesis On St. John 1:1-18



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