

True God and true man Sermon on Christmas Day John 1, 1-5 and 9-18



[1](#) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2](#) He was with God in the beginning. [3](#) Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. [4](#) In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. [5](#) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[9](#) The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. [10](#) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. [11](#) He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. [12](#) Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— [13](#) children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. [14](#) The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15](#) (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' ") [16](#) Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. [17](#) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. [18](#) No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Bereschit Barah Elohim et haschamaim vaet haarez. In the beginning God created heaven and earth These holy first words of the Bible were known to every Jewish person and everyone learned them by heart and took them to heart as their personal destiny. This means that God not only created me personally, but always holds his creative hand over my life day and night. He made me and wanted me exactly as I am. John also believes in this and begins the gospel with these very words. "In the beginning... was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word." It is clear that John means Jesus by this expression "Word." You could also say it differently: In the beginning was Jesus and Jesus was with God and God was Jesus. What John is saying is that just as God began something completely new and wonderful when he created the world, he is now beginning something completely new and wonderful with Jesus. But the new thing in Jesus is not actually new; it spans a very wide arc before creation. As the Nicene Creed confesses: Jesus Christ "born of the Father before all time and world, God of God, light of light, true God. John deliberately takes the first verses of the Bible about creation and uses them in the introduction to his gospel to refer to Jesus. This makes it clear: Just as God has made us all personally, he wants to give us new life personally through Jesus Christ. In this respect, Jesus is fatefully connected to my life. In him it is decided whether I live or die; whether I walk in darkness or am in the light. Just as my existence and everything that I have and that makes up my life is determined and willed by the hand of the Creator, so I find my life brought to its final meaning and goal in the hand of Jesus. I am saved through Jesus. And when I go to the manger, I meet none other than my Creator himself. The Creator who made me in his image. Through Jesus, the Creator God says to me: "Look That's how I always wanted you. Like the child in the manger." In Jesus, I see God's great "promise" to my personal life and to my world. Yes, God wanted the world and he wants the world and he loves the world. Yes, God wants your life. With all its mistakes, fears and worries. God wants you! Contrary to all the Greek philosophers who saw creation as a heavenly accident and contrary to all the gloomy prophecies of our time regarding

the future, I see in Jesus God's great and irrefutable "yes" to me, to my world and to my life. Contrary to all the noise of war, hatred and murder, I look into the manger and see that the living, holy God is holding us and the world in his arms and he wants us to live. But that is not the most amazing thing we discover in the manger. The most amazing thing is even greater and much more incomprehensible. The most amazing thing is this: God himself becomes a part of our world! The one who stood as a great counterpart to the world and spoke with his powerful word: "Let there be light!" He not only strives to preserve his creation but strives to become one with it. The Creator becomes a creature. The one through whom we all live, breathe, love and experience joy and sorrow here on earth. He is now among us! One of us. This thought that God the Creator is among us is beyond our imagination. We cannot comprehend it at all. Even back then, when Jesus went his way in Israel, no one could really understand it. Neither the disciples nor the other contemporaries. "He came to his own. And his own did not recognize him." It is not possible to understand Jesus with our strength and human understanding. This long journey to us humans and this incomprehensible miracle that God is among us can only be understood if what is in him is given to us. But that is exactly what it is. Jesus does not come empty-handed, but He is full of grace and truth that is turned towards us; who not only speaks to us, not only calls us, not only impresses us with his wonderful person and his deeds, but gives himself so that we can be a part of him. Because he is life. And he came to give us life. Jesus wants nothing other than what the Creator God wanted from the beginning. Life! And God gives life! Already at the beginning of creation and now also through Jesus. Whoever has Jesus has life. Whoever hears his word and believes in him has life. When I cast my gaze into the manger, I not only see the child, but I see my life, I see that I am wanted by God. That God wants me. That is why John says: In him is the light. It is not dark when I am pushed to the margins of society by many setbacks in my life; it is not dark when I grow old and sick; it is not dark when I see the gloomy predictions of the future, it is only dark when I do not have this child in the manger. Of course the world scares us. Of course there are many unsolvable problems. Of course we are sad when we see people dying or getting sick. That is because we humans do not have the light in us. No one has the light. Even if we can now brightly light up our world and spread information and light every second through modern communication technology, it remains dark in and around us. In the verses from the Gospel of John, this fact is explained using John as an example. Of all people, John was definitely a bright light. He was the last prophet and proclaimed God's word by pointing to Jesus. That is certainly why John was a very special figure in the Bible. John also mentions this in his prologue. But then he quickly returns to the facts when he says: "John was not the light... The light is Jesus alone." It is clearly stated here. The light does not come from man. Not from holy or good people. Not even from John. At most, we humans can point to the light in Jesus like John. But we ourselves are not the light. With everything that can happen between us and God, we cannot, from our human possibilities, decide, learn or practice to be part of Jesus. Life in Christ does not come about through human intervention. We must also thwart all efforts and aspirations to make ourselves better than others. Because only one thing is important. We must be born again by God through Jesus. In order to bring about this new birth, a wonderful exchange takes place. And it can be summed up like this: In the manger I find no one other than God himself. God becomes flesh. He takes his place where I have my place. In the dark places of my life. Where hopelessness and sin take hold. There he takes his place. God becomes flesh. God takes the place of sin. He takes on our flesh and lives with and among us. True God and true man. He was God and humbled himself. He had no sin and became sin for us. He became a curse for us. It would have suited human reason better if God had thundered from above and declared his right of ownership over us. It would have suited human reason better if Jesus had appeared as a half-god and half-man. But that was not the case. He came into his own. Fully God and fully man. Jesus thus declared his right of ownership over us. He not only

endured our fears, joys, struggles and ultimately our darkness, but exchanged them for what is his. He sought out the darkest places of human existence and made it bright there.

When we look at Jesus in the manger with Mary and Joseph. And Jesus the man among poor sinners. Especially when we consider his terrible death on the cross, then we can almost forget who we are dealing with here. Jesus became human. And at the same time is God among us! The one born in the stable is just like us. But in that he is God and man, he is what none of us are and will never be. Many have not seen this God in man. Caiaphas and Pilate only saw a man. And many of our time also see in Jesus only a moral teacher, a prophet or a role model of how to live as a better person. John wants to encourage us to see this Jesus for who he really is. God in man. That is why he can't stop being amazed. He invites us with excited words to walk this path with him: "What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands... we tell you." You can tell from John's words: here is someone who has understood it and yet cannot express it in words. Someone who knows the risen Lord and whose scales have fallen from his eyes. And now he has no choice but to praise and glorify. "Come and see!" John calls to us. It is clear that our eyes, ears and mind are also poor witnesses of what happened at Christmas. And yet we approach the manger. We do this only because the child himself does not come to us empty. He comes to us full of grace and truth. And because in him is the fullness of spiritual gifts and faith, I dare to approach the manger and discover how his presence penetrates my heart and my lips form the incredible words. Jesus Christ, true man and true God. For me. Amen.