

Title: **THE ETERNAL CHRIST**
Text: John 1:1-5
Date: Sunday Morning — January 6, 2008
Tape # John #3
Reading: *Colossians 1:3-22*
Introduction:

The title of my message is **The Eternal Christ**. My text is John 1:1-5. These five verses set before us the matchless sublimity of our Lord Jesus Christ in his eternal Being and Character. In these five verses inspired by God the Holy Spirit, John sets before us heights no mortal mind can hope to scale and depths that none can fathom. Yet, he sets these things before us in such simple, clear language that they cannot be misunderstood, except by those who are willingly ignorant.

(John 1:1-5) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

John's Gospel is the Gospel of the Eternal Christ. We do not have to guess what John's purpose was in writing. He tells us plainly in the last verse of chapter 20, — *“These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”* His great aim in these 21 chapters is not merely to inform us of historical facts relating to the life of Christ on this earth. John's purpose is to show us the deity and eternal Godhead of that man who is known the world over as *“Jesus of Nazareth,”* that we might trust him as God our Savior, and obtain eternal life in him.

And what man could have been better suited to show us our Savior's glorious Godhead? John was distinctly prepared of God for the work.

- He had been with the Lord from the beginning of his earthly ministry, as a chosen Apostle.
- John was there when the Lord Jesus performed his mighty miracles.
- John was with him when the Master instituted the Supper.
- John heard the Savior's many sermons, his parables and his explanation of the parables.

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- John laid his head upon the Lord's chest, as only a loving brother or friend might do.
- He was with the Lord in Gethsemane.
- He was by his side as the Lord Jesus poured out his life's blood upon the cursed tree.
- John took the Savior's mother into his own household, and provided and cared for her until her death.
- He was present when the risen Christ ascended back into heaven.
- He saw the destruction of the Jewish nation, the temple, and the City of Jerusalem.
- And it was to this man John that our Lord appeared on the Isle of Patmos, showing him all that he would accomplish before time is no more.

In these opening verses of his Gospel John shows us the eternal Christ in his relationship to time, to the Godhead, to creation, and to men.

RELATIONSHIP TO TIME

First, John declares our Savior's relationship to time. Our Savior is not a mere creature of time. He is before all time and the Creator of time. Christ is eternal. John tells us "*in the beginning was the Word.*" He did not begin to exist when the heavens and the earth were made. He was with the Father "*before the world was*" (John 17:5), possessing from the beginning all the glory that he now possesses as our successful Surety. He was already existing when matter was first created and before time began. He is "*before all things*" (Colossians 1:17). He is eternal.

(John 1:1-2) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God."

Christ, the Word, was continually in being with God, in perfect union, communion and being with God the Father and God the Spirit. In time he came to be with man; but in the beginning he was with God. The Lord Jesus Christ is God the eternal Son. He is...

- Our Eternal Surety. — "*The Surety of a Better Covenant*"
- Our Eternal Sacrifice. — "*The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"

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- Our Eternal Shepherd.
- Our Eternal Savior (2 Timothy 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:3-6).

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Now, I want you to get the sweet honey found in the honeycomb of our Savior’s glorious eternity. For as long as he has had being, we have had being in him. As soon as he stood forth in the beginning with God, as our Head and Representative, we stood forth in him, as one with him.

- **We were in him as his seed** (Psalm 22:30-31).

(Psalms 22:30-31) “A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. (31) They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.”

- **We were in him as his body** (Psalm 139:14-18).

(Psalms 139:14-18) “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. (15) My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (16) Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them. (17) How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! (18) *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.”

God’s elect are the members of Christ’s mystical body, the church. All the members of his body were written in his book, the book of life, when as yet, as regards their actual existence, there was none of them. We were given to him in eternity, when he was constituted our covenant Head in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Thus we became, in

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prospect of our Savior's incarnation, "*members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*" How tenderly our blessed Redeemer reminded his Father of these covenant transactions, when he said in his great intercessory prayer, "*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them*" (John 17:9-10).

Being thus given to Christ, and constituted members of his mystical body, we can no more perish than Christ himself. He is our Head, and as he is possessed of all power, full of all love, filled with all wisdom, and replete with all mercy, grace and truth, how can he, how will he, allow any of his members to fall out of his body, and be lost and separated from him forever? Will any man willingly allow his eye, or his hand, or his foot, or even the tip of his little finger, to be cut off? If any member of our body perishes, if we lose an arm or a leg, it is because we have not power to prevent it. But all power in heaven and in earth belongs to Christ. Therefore not one member of his mystical body, "*the fulness of him that filleth all in all,*" can perish for lack of power in him to save it.

We do not become members of his body when we believe. We were members of his body when he was "*in the beginning with God.*" When we are quickened and made alive unto God savingly and experimentally, by the regenerating work of the Spirit, we are brought into the realization of this blessed eternal union with Christ; but the union was from everlasting.

RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

Second, John shows us our blessed Savior's eternal relationship to the triune Godhead. He was from the beginning with God, because he is God, one with the Father and the Spirit. We rejoice to know that Christ our Savior is God. But, I want you to see the significance of the fact that John here declares that he is the Word, the eternal Logos of the Triune God.

Christ "*was in the beginning with God*" as the unuttered speech and thought of the triune God. It is only in Christ that God is fully told out. He so fully and so perfectly reveals God that he declares, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:9). To know him is to know God (John 17:3). The "*light of the knowledge of the glory of God*" is seen only "*in the face of Jesus Christ*" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

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- **It is Christ the Word, our crucified Substitute, the Lamb of God, who opens the sealed book of God's eternal purpose, reveals it to us and fulfills it in the accomplishment of redemption** (Revelation 5:1-10).

(Revelation 5:1-10) “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. (2) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? (3) And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. (4) And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. (5) And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (6) And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (7) And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. (8) And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (9) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

- **It is Christ the Word, crucified as our Substitute and risen as our Savior, who interprets and fulfills all the Old Testament Scriptures** (Luke 24:25-27, 45-47). — All the Types! — All the Prophecies! — All the Promises!

(Luke 24:25-27) “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: (26) Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? (27) And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

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(Luke 24:45-47) “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, (46) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

- **It Christ, the Word, which we preach to men, by whom the veil of spiritual darkness is taken away and the glory of God is revealed** (2 Corinthians 3:14-18). — Mercy and Truth! — Righteousness and Peace! — Justice and Grace! — “*A just God and a Savior!*”

(2 Corinthians 3) “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? (2) Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: (3) *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. (4) And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: (5) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God; (6) Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

(7) But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: (8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (9) For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (10) For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. (11) For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious. (12) Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: (13) And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ.

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(15) But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. (16) Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. (17) Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. (18) But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

(2 Corinthians 4:1-6) “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; (2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. (3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

RELATIONSHIP TO CREATION

Third, John shows us, with sublime simplicity, the relationship of our Lord Jesus Christ to creation (v. 3). — In this Book creation is almost always associated with redemption.

(John 1:3) “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Liberals, Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses, and countless other heretics tell us that Christ is but a creature of God. This Book declares that he is God our Creator! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word by whom the worlds and all that they contain were made (Psalm 148:5; Ephesians 3:8-9; Colossians 1:15-19). — “*By the word of God the heavens were of old*” (2 Peter 3:5).

(Psalms 148:1-5) “Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. (2) Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. (3) Praise ye him, sun and moon:

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praise him, all ye stars of light. (4) Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that *be* above the heavens. (5) Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.”

(Ephesians 3:8-9) “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; (9) And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

(Colossians 1:12-19) “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins: (15) Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: (16) For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (18) And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. (19) For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell.”

“*All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.*” — He who is before all things is eternal. He who made all things is omnipotent. And he who is eternal and omnipotent is God. **And this great God, our Creator, who made all things, is he who has made peace for us by the blood of his cross** (Colossians 1:20). In the new creation of grace, as in the creation of the world itself, Christ is the Creator. It is Christ who declares, “*Behold, I make all things new*” (Revelation 21:5). — “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature!*” And of the new creation, the Book of God everywhere declares, — “*Without him was not anything made that was made!*” **Without him there can be no...**

- A New Covenant
- A New Name
- A New and Living Way
- A New Heart

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- A New Spirit
- A New Garment
- A New Song
- A New Heaven
- A New Earth

(Revelation 4:11) “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

If all things were created for his pleasure, it cannot be doubted that “*he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied!*”

RELATIONSHIP TO MEN

Fourth, our text reveals Christ’s relationship to men (vv. 4-5).

(John 1:4-5) “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

Christ is Life. — “*In him was life.*”

- Natural Life
- Spiritual Life
- Resurrection Life
- Eternal Life

He who created all things must be the Fountain of life and Giver of life. The word “*life*” is used here in its widest sense. All creature life comes from him, for “*in him we live and move and have our being.*” All spiritual life or eternal life, comes from and is found in him. He has given us eternal life (1 John 5:11).

(John 11:25-26) “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (26) And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

And **Christ is Light.** — “*And the life was the light of men.*”

- Natural Light — Conscience

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- Carnal Light — Reason
- Spiritual Light
- Heaven's Eternal Light

Christ is the only moral, spiritual Light there is. He is that “*the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*” (v. 9). Every rational man is morally enlightened (Romans 2:15; Romans 1:18-21). That means all are responsible and accountable.

(Romans 2:15) “Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.”

(Romans 1:18-21) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; (19) Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. (20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

Though all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, all responsible before God and shall give an account (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:12) for the “*Light*” they have despised and refused.

Look at verse 5 again. John tells us that Christ, the Light, blazes forth in the darkness of man's depraved heart and sin-darkened soul. That is clearly the meaning of the first part of verse 5. — “*The light shineth in darkness!*” But the last clause of verse 5 might be translated “*the darkness comprehended it not,*” meaning the darkness perceived no light, though the Light shines ever so brightly.

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However, the word translated “*comprehended*” is sometimes translated “*overtake*” (1 Thessalonians 5:4). Blessed be his name forever, when Christ comes to shine in the hearts of his own, he does not just give light, he causes his own to see the Light. He shines with such irresistible Light in the

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hearts of his redeemed that we simply cannot overtake the Light. Rather, the Light completely overtakes us! As it was in the old creation, so it is in the new. God says, “*Let there be light,*” and there is light (Genesis 1:1-3).

(Genesis 1:1-3) “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (2) And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (3) And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” With those words the Apostle John was inspired to begin his Gospel, showing us the eternal Christ, “*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen!*”