

5. Read Ephesians 1:3-6 (see sermon outline). Why can't our immediate circumstances steal our purpose in God?

6. How can or does your infinite future impact your finite now?

7. What other insights or encouragement does the pre-existence of Christ bring to your celebration of Advent?

Beyond the Manger - Part 2

"Before the Manger"

John 1:1-5, 9

Christmas can be the beginning of a great journey this winter by looking beyond the manger to the Christ of Christmas, the Light- and Life-giver who overcomes the _____.

The opening of John's Gospel never mentions the _____, but it helps us to see beyond the manger into the deeper and profound mysteries of Christ and Christmas.

6 Attributes of Christ that Overcome the Darkness (Part 2)

1. Christ is the **λόγος** (= **Logos** = "the _____").

The ultimate power and principle behind the universe is personal. He speaks to you and on your _____.

2. Christ is _____.

The Bible Teaches Christ's Pre-existence

John 8: ⁵⁸ "Before Abraham was born, I am!"

Exodus 3: ¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

John 8: ⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

What Christ Was Doing Before the Manger?

As one of the Persons of the _____, he was God creating the universe, calling Abraham, rescuing Joseph, calling Moses, splitting the Red Sea...

As the second Person of the _____, he had a special role in the creation of the universe, Jesus tells us he was eternally glorifying in the Father and the Holy Spirit (which basically means he was delighting in them and sharing in mutual love). He was the Rock that provided water for the Israelites in wilderness, Paul tells us in the New Testament. And some think he may have been the Angel of the Lord that shows up from time to time in the Old Testament.

What Difference Does This Make for Us?

- You are included in the _____ of Christ's infinite love.

John 17: ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

- You have a _____, even in difficult times.

Christ was making plans for you in the _____ past.

Ephesians 1: ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

- Your good and glorious infinite future impacts your finite _____.

Ephesians 1: ¹³...When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

- Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
- Share one tradition you love during the Advent season and whether or not it will be impacted by COVID.
- Read John 1:1-5,9 and John 17:5. If glorifying means, in part, delighting, describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son in eternity past.
- How would you describe or explain being included in that kind of relationship to an educated 13-year-old?