



The Second Sunday of Christmas - Year B January 4, 2015

LESSONS

The First Reading - Jeremiah 31: 7-14

The Psalm - Psalm 147: 12-20

The Second Reading - Ephesians 1: 3-14

The Gospel Reading - John 1: [1-9], 10-18

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Jeremiah%2031:%207-14%0Acw%20Psalm%20147:%2012-20%0AEphesians%201:%203-14%0AJohn%201:%20\[1-9\],%2010-18](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Jeremiah%2031:%207-14%0Acw%20Psalm%20147:%2012-20%0AEphesians%201:%203-14%0AJohn%201:%20[1-9],%2010-18)

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty God,
who hast poured upon us the new light of thine incarnate Word;
Grant that the same light, enkindled in our hearts,
may shine forth in our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
in the birth of your Son
you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word,
and shown us the fullness of your love:
Help us to walk in this light and dwell in his love
that we may know the fullness of his joy;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

A: The revealed Word has made us rich beyond telling. As heirs of life, let us pray, "Gather up all in Christ," and respond, C: Amen.

A: O God who makes all things new, refurbish the hearts of those who serve the church in other lands, strengthen the churches abroad and continue to call faithful gospel workers. Gather up all in Christ. C: Amen.

A: O God who understands what is near and what is far, let those in Government services work with integrity to facilitate properly the gospel's advance. Gather up all in Christ. C: Amen.

A: O God who embraces the families of the world, where there is the failure of love, give birth to caring; where there is brokenness, bring healing. Gather up all in Christ. C: Amen.

A: God of love, lift the burdens of women who live in poverty, hunger, and without dignity. Gather up all in Christ. C: Amen.

A: God who searches all hearts and minds, have mercy upon us, weighed down by abundance in a world that still longs for necessities. Gather up all in Christ. C: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Presider or deacon

As we celebrate with joy the birth of Jesus to Jews, let us offer prayers to God who gathers his sons and daughters in a holy family.

Deacon or other leader

By the birth of the timeless Son of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, for the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all believers who put their trust in the incarnate Son of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the leaders of the nations and all in authority, and for peace and justice.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the conversion of the whole human race to our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For travellers, for the sick and the suffering, for the hungry and the oppressed, for those in prison, and for the dying and the dead.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Remembering our most glorious N, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

God of all families and peoples, accept the prayers we offer in this joyful season. As we welcome this mystery of your love, may we delight in our joy as children and heirs of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Light eternal,
you have nourished us in the mystery
of the body and blood of your Son:
By your grace keep us ever faithful to your word,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

O Holy One,
heavenly angels spoke to earthly shepherds
and eternity entered time in the child of Bethlehem.
Through the telling of the Christmas story,
let our temporal lives be caught up in the eternal
in that same child,
that we might join shepherds and all the heavenly host
in praising the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

God of glory,
your splendour shines from a manger in Bethlehem,
where the Light of the world is humbly born
into the darkness of human night.
Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world,
so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice,

and defenders of all for whom there is no room. Amen.

Light of life, you came in flesh,
born into human pain and joy,
and gave us power to be your children.
Grant us faith, O Christ, to see your presence among us,
so that all of creation may sing new songs of gladness
and walk in the way of peace. Amen.

We bless you, Abba, Father,
for you have visited your people
in one like us in all things but sin,
and in human fragility you have revealed
the face of divinity.
Gather into your arms
all the peoples of the world,
so that in your embrace
we may find blessing, peace,
and the fullness of our inheritance
as your daughters and sons. Amen.

With the angels of heaven we proclaim your glory, O God.
As the radiance of your presence lights up the heavens,
we pray for enlightenment
for your church on behalf of the whole world.
Grant that, through our prayers,
our lives may radiate the presence of Christ
to all who dwell on earth,
for he is our Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

God of all ages,
in the birth of Christ
your boundless love for your people
shattered the power of darkness.
Be born in us with that same love and light,
that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God of incarnation,
your angel host announces
that peace has been born among us,
embodied in fragile flesh.

With confidence in the power of that miracle,
we bring before you our prayers for the church and the world.
By your grace, transform our prayers from words to deeds,
that we may live as a holy people
in the dawn of your peace,
redeemed from all that divides us. Amen.

Christ, our God,
whom humble shepherds worshiped at a manger,
you are holy and most high, merciful and mighty.
Startle us to wakefulness,
that we may rejoice in your new and glorious dawn,
and, in your holy name,
act to mend this suffering world. Amen.

Tender and precious God,
from ancient times
the promise of your salvation
has sustained your people. With Mary and Joseph,
teach us to treasure in our hearts the birth of Jesus,
and with shepherds and angels,
lead us to praise his holy name. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

The Gospel Reading - John 1: [1-9], 10-18

In the opening verses of the book, the evangelist has told us, that the Word, the *logos*, (i.e. what God says, God in action, creating, revealing and redeeming) existed before all time. He is the force behind all that exists; he causes physical and spiritual life to be; life, goodness, light, overcomes all evil. Jesus, the “light” (v. [7](#)), took on being human through God, and is a force for goodness, light, godliness, for all people.

Now he tells of John *the baptizer*, who is sent, commissioned by God, to point to Jesus, to “testify to the light” (v. [7](#)). He is the lamp that illuminates the way, but Christ is the light (v. [8](#)). When the religious authorities (“Jews”, v. [19](#)) send emissaries (“priests and Levites”) to assess the authenticity of this religious figure, John tells them that he is neither of those whom they are expecting to come to earth: neither “the Messiah” (v. [20](#)) nor the returned “Elijah” (v. [21](#)). (Jews believed that one or both would establish a kingdom on earth free from Roman domination.) Neither is he “the prophet” who was expected (by some) to be instrumental in establishing the Messiah’s kingdom. John says simply

that he is the one who prepares “the way of the Lord” (v. [23](#)), who announces the Messiah’s coming, fulfilling Isaiah [40:3](#). Representatives of the Pharisees (who enforced traditional Jewish law and practice) ask in v. [25](#): why are you performing an official rite without official status? (Jews baptized proselytes at the time.) John tells them that the one to whom he points is already on earth (v. [27](#)); he is so great that I am not even worthy to be his slave. Surprisingly, per v. [28](#), this occurred outside Israel.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

#1. PROLOGUE John 1:1-18

-In the beginning was the Word, In the beginning before there was time and matter, there was the Logic, the Intelligence, the Logical Intelligence, the Grand Designer, the Super Computer.

-And the Word was with God, This Logic was with God. In the beginning before there was time and matter, this Logic was distinguished and different than God.

-And the Word was God. But this Logic was God.

John’s Gospel is more philosophical. In the first five verses, there is no reference to Jesus of Nazareth, but to the Word. In Greek, the Word is “logos” from which we receive our word, “logic.” So the translation could have read, “In the beginning was the Logic, and the Logic was with God and the Logic was God.” “All things were made in the beginning through this logic.” The Logic was a personal pronoun; that is, the Logic was him. The Logic was life and light.

-He was in the beginning with God. Jesus existed in the beginning, before the universe and time came into being. In the Gospel of John, we will hear much more about the “pre-existence” of Jesus; that Jesus existed before Father Abraham. From the opening verse of John’s gospel, the reader is to understand that Jesus was and is fully God.

-All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. The Word (the Logic of God, the Mind of God, the Intelligence of God) was the designer and creator of the entire universe. We hear similar themes in the Book of Colossians 1:14-16: “He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created

through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”

-What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. This Logic created life. Knowing that the Earth is about 4.6 billion years old, at some moment before time, life miraculously began. Whether a person believes in the evolutionary schemas or not, there was a miracle on this Earth which distinguishes this Earth from other matter in the ever-expanding universe. What distinguishes Earth above all matter was that life was born on this Earth. The creation of matter is one thing. There is plenty of matter in the whole and ever-expanding at the speed of light universe. But the creation of life is what distinguishes Earth from all matter in the universe.

The Gospel of John is highly philosophical and uses philosophical categories of his day such as “life” and “light.” In the Gospel of John, the word, “life,” is used 36 times and the word, “light,” is used 22 times. Similarly, light is contrasted with darkness. These philosophical and theological categories were familiar to the thought patterns of the Stoics and Hellenists of the day. Yet John also knew the Old Testament and Jewish thought. Jesus came into the world that the world may have life and eternal life and the fullness of life.

In the first three gospels, the word, “kingdom,” is used 113 times but in the Gospel of John, the word, “kingdom,” is used only twice. In John, the concept of “life” replaces the concept of “the kingdom” which is repeatedly used in the first three gospels.

-The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. Jesus will shine in the dark world. Darkness could not overcome Jesus. This is a word of hope. Underline it. Circle it. Write this verse into the memory page on page 362. Near the word “did,” write the word, “can.” The darkness can not overcome the light. In our depression and wanting to give up, we are reminded that God’s light will never be snuffed out from the world.

-There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. Underline the phrase, “sent from God.” John repeatedly emphasizes that Jesus was “sent from God.” We will hear that the word, “apostles,” means to be “sent” and Christians are to be “sent from God into the world.”

-He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. Circle the word, “believe.” As we move into the Gospel of John, we will hear that what John wants is to believe in Jesus Christ more than anything else.

-He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. John the Baptist was not the light but pointed to the light. We are the same: we point to the greatest light in the whole world, Jesus Christ.

-The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. Circle the word, “true.” We are going to find out that Jesus was/is the true light that beckons for people in the world to follow him. There are thousands of other lights beckoning for the human race to follow, but only Christ is the true light, the true beacon, the true radiance who guides our life.

-He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. In this gospel, we will repeatedly hear that the world did not know Christ and did not follow him. The word, “world,” is a symbolic word, that symbolizes all who do not follow the light of God in Christ.

-He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. The Gospel of John will lay out the basic tragedy in Jesus’ life: his own people did not follow him.

-But to all who received him, who believed in his name, Circle the word, “receive.” What is it to receive Christ? It is to believe in his name. To believe in his name means to believe in his powerful Presence. As we move into this course, we will gradually discover what the word, “believe,” means to the John.

-He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. Jesus gives us the power to become children of God. Who are the children of God? The children of God are those people who believe in his name.

People are children of God not because of blood or inheritance or nationality or belonging to a religious group.

People are children of God not because of the will power within their psyche. We humans do not will to become children of God. Becoming children of God is not a result of will power.

People become children of God because they are born of God. Just like a person’s biological birth is not the result of will power but is purely a gift from God, so also our rebirth is not the result of will power within but is purely a gift from God. We will hear about this during the story of Nicodemus in John 3 and his being “born again” and “born from above.”

-And the Word became flesh and lived among us, The Logic of God became flesh, became a human being. Jesus was God in the flesh. The word, "incarnation," means "in the flesh."

He lived among us, or tented among us or tabernacled among us. Jesus was the flesh of God and he lived among us here on earth. That is what this story about Jesus in the Gospel of John is all about: God living in the human body, mind and spirit of Jesus.

-And we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. Circle the word, "we." The word, "we," refers to the Apostle John and all who witnessed the life of Jesus on earth. "Glory" refers to the glorious radiant presence of God in Jesus. In the Old Testament, the Jews saw God's glorious radiant presence in the pillar of fire by night and now they could see God's glorious presence in the life of Jesus.

Jesus was the Father's only son. The Greek word for "only" is "monogenesis," which means mono-genetic Son of God. All the rest of us are the adopted children of God. God has only one, "mono-genesis," Son and that was/is Jesus.

Jesus was full of grace and truth. Circle the three words, "full," "grace" and "truth." "Full" means like a cargo ship was full to the brim with cargo. "Grace" means free gift of love. "Truth" means that Jesus was full of the reality and authenticity of God.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Sermons from Seattle - The Word became flesh

Good exegetical sermon which presents the difference of John's Gospel.

http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_the_word_became_flesh.htm

Day 1 - A reminder where our hearts belong

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Today is the first Sunday after Christmas Day; it is part of the Christmas Season, part of the twelve days of Christmas. On Christmas Eve, I heard a television anchor start out by saying: "Now that the Christmas Season is coming to a close...." And I thought, well ... actually, the Christmas season begins with Christmas day and continues for twelve days rather than the twelve days before December 25, even though some Christmas trees are already finding their way to the curb and stores are advertising after Christmas sales and putting up Valentine and spring decorations.

http://day1.org/1676-christmastide_a_reminder_where_our_hearts_belong

CHILDREN

Children's address - Church of Scotland

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/worship/starters_for_sunday/january

Anna's Hosannas

Scroll down to Teaching on your own section

<http://annashosannas.net/Christmas-A.php>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Hymns on the theme of the passage from John

<http://www.hymnary.org/texts?qu=scripture:john%201>

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title