

Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2023.12.24

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Speaker-AM: Josh Vinyard

Title: 7 Churches Of Revelation -
Philadelphia

Recording:

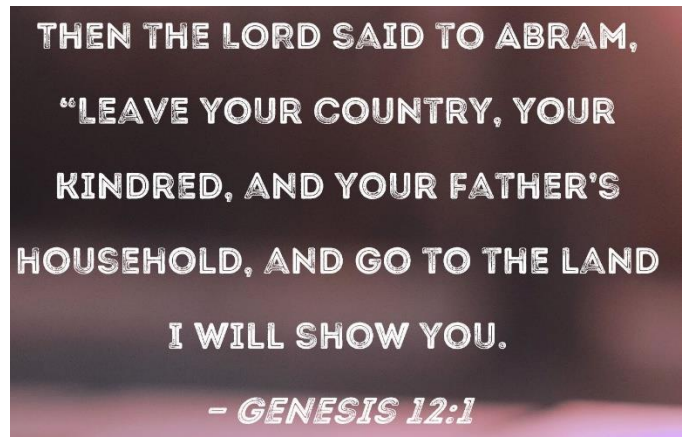
oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/7churches-philadelphia

Speaker-PM: Brad Bunyard

Title: Crossing The Border

Recording:

oakgrovecofc.org/sermons/crossing-the-border



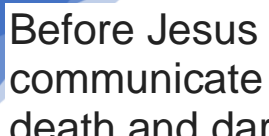
Before Jesus Was, 12/26/23 by Doy Moyer

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke both speak to various details concerning the birth of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Mark says nothing about these details but rather jumps right into the work of John and then immediately to the baptism, temptations, and beginning of Jesus' public ministry. The Gospel of John is entirely different in how it begins, for John starts not from the birth of Jesus or His public ministry, but rather even before Jesus came into the world. John established something vital about the identity of Jesus prior to His becoming a man. He is God. He is the Creator. He is the Life and Light of the world:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1-5, ESV).

“In the beginning” ties back to the opening words of Scripture (Gen 1:1). “God created,” but John now reveals how involved Jesus was in the creation. Jesus was already there with the Father, and He is not a created being. Rather, He is Himself God, and “all things were made through Him.” In fact, John says, there was nothing created that was made without Him. If nothing was created without Him, then He is not created. He is the Creator.

John not only refers to Jesus as God but also as the Word. Jesus is the Logos, and while this term has deep implications about Jesus, this stresses that Jesus is the communication of God to man. In verse 18, John wrote that Jesus has made the Father known. This same concept is found in other places. For example, Jesus affirmed his unity with the Father in John 14:9, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” In John 10:30, Jesus claimed, “I and the Father are one.” While no one has seen the fullness of God's glory (cf. I Timothy 6:16), Jesus came to reveal God to mankind, to communicate God's message and God's will. God has indeed “spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-3).



Before Jesus was born, He was life and light, and He came into the world to communicate and manifest His life and light to a world that had plunged into death and darkness because of sin. Once again, John connects to Genesis and the first recorded words spoken by God, “Let there be light.” While God provided physical light for the creation, the provision of light pointed to a much greater Light that would come through Jesus. This highlights a theme of John’s Gospel. “I am the light of the world,” Jesus claimed (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36). This theme culminates in the new heavens and new earth where there is no night, “for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it” (Revelation 21:23-24). “The Lord God will be their light” (Revelation 22:5).

As Jesus is light, so also, He is life. That anyone could be born into this world at all required a source of life in the first place. John affirms that Jesus is that source even before creation. Jesus has “life in Himself” (John 5:26). This also speaks to the power Jesus has for resurrection. As He claimed so powerfully before raising Lazarus, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). Because of who Jesus is and what He did, we have the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

Jesus, then, in whom is life and light from eternity, “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). John now affirms the incarnation. Before He was born, the identity of Jesus was clearly divine. He is the “I AM” (John 8:58). Yet He came in the flesh to communicate God in such a way that we may behold His glory, “glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” He “tabernacled” among us as God’s temple. He is “God with us.” Yet John also shows that the great display of God’s glory through Jesus was found in the love He demonstrated by going to the cross. “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).

Before Jesus was born, He was, and is always, God. He was manifested in the flesh to bring His light into the dark world so that “you may become sons of light” (John 12:36). While the birth of Jesus is a marvelous event, what makes that event so great is the fact of who Jesus is from eternity.