

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Merry Christmas!

***“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world”*** (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Long ago and at many times, God spoke to His people. He spoke to His people in a partial nature through the prophets.

We can think of Moses and the burning bush when an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame out of the midst of the bush.

We can point to visions and dreams like Joseph and Daniel. We can point to the calling of Samuel.

***“But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son”*** (Hebrews 1:2a). The word “but” has a tendency to wipe out what came before it. We say things like, *“I’d like to do what you’re asking, but...”*

However, the “but” here is not set against the sureness of God’s speaking in the Old Testament times, but it is set against its partialness and the variety of its ways: law, history, poetry, prophecy. What the Old Testament believers received from God was only partial and the message of the prophets was incomplete. More was to come, but this more to come did not cancel out what had been divinely recorded but only completes it.

Those prophets of old were certainly inspired by God to write and proclaim God’s Word. Through those prophets, God was speaking. Those prophets spoke God’s Word as they clung to God’s Word for their hope of salvation – for they as we, shared in that first sin and needed a Savior. We need a savior from our sin of unbelief and selfish ambition. For ***“no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”*** (2 Peter 1:21). Every word in Holy Scripture is God’s Word, not just words of sinful man. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to write them down for us, so that we can always cling to them.

But now – ***“in these last days”*** – Jesus has the Last Word, a word that redeems us from sin and death. Today, God is no longer speaking partially through His prophets. Today, He is now speaking fully through Jesus Christ.

So, now that we have the Son of God, God has no more to say, since the Redeemer to whom the Old Testament pointed is the ultimate Word and the perfect revelation of God. Today, we have the Final Word of God, which is revealed in His Word, the Bible.

Now, some may say today: *“If only if I could hear the very Word of God like Moses and Elijah and Isaiah!”* Yes, that would have been awesome to hear, but what we have is so much better! They only received snippets, pieces and parts of the various ways God revealed Himself. Today, ***“in these last days”*** – God speaks to us through His Son!

So, what God spoke through the prophets from Moses to Malachi, we have complete through our Lord Jesus Christ!

And Jesus is not just a prophet of prophets. Jesus is God. This Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary is the Creator of the world. This Jesus existed before time existed. This Jesus spoke the world into existence.

***“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”*** (Genesis 1:1). Here, we have a reference to God the Father. ***“The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”*** (Genesis 1:2). Here, we have a reference to the Holy Spirit. But where is Jesus? Then God said, ***“Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw that it was good”*** (Genesis 1:3-4). Jesus is the One who spoke.

St. John affirms this in our Christmas Gospel this morning: ***“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”*** (John 1:1-3a).

Jesus is ***“the radiance of the glory of God”*** (Hebrews 1:3). You see, the whole array of God’s divine attributes radiates forth in Jesus. Radiance is an inner brightness that shines out like the sun in the sky with its streaming light. To see that light is to see the sun; to see Jesus is to see the God of glory.

Jesus is ***“the exact imprint of [God’s] nature”*** (Hebrews 1:3). You see, Jesus is an exact image of the invisible God made visible in Jesus. Jesus exactly represents God the Father. So, to know Jesus is to know God’s nature and God’s glory. For as Jesus said, ***“Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father”*** (John 14:9) and ***“I and the Father are One”*** (John 10:30).

Not only was Jesus active in Creation, but He ***“upholds the universe by the Word of His power”*** (Hebrews 1:3). You see, we exist today because of Jesus. He keeps everything going. The sun rises each day because of Jesus. ***“[Jesus] is before all things, and in Him all things hold together”*** (Colossians 1:17).

Jesus is ***“the purification for sins”*** (Hebrews 1:3). Sin stains. Sin defiles. Sin damns. Only One could purify and that is God. And only once would God do this. At Calvary’s cross, the Creator and Sustainer became the Sin-bearer. God took upon Himself human flesh for that moment. He was born on this day with the purpose of being the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

Then, with the work of redemption done, Jesus ***“sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”*** (Hebrews 1:3). Today, Jesus is ***“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion”*** (Ephesians 1:21a). He has all power and all honor. The ascended Lord holds the scepter in His nail-scarred hands, ruling over all in heaven and on earth.

***“For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’? Or again, ‘I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son’?*** (Hebrews 1:5). You see, no one has ever been saved by the name of an angel. But there is a name that saves. ***“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12).

Jesus is superior to the angels, because He was ***“begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father”*** (Nicene Creed). Jesus is superior because from all eternity He is God’s Son, the Second Person of the Triune God, true God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is Emmanuel. He is fully God become fully man – for us.

But what about that second phrase: ***“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”***? Those words were spoken originally about Solomon, but these words also have a deeper meaning. You see, they pointed ahead to David’s greater Son, the eternal One whose kingdom would have no end. It is not enough to call Jesus “Son,” but He also calls God “Father.” Never has there been such a divine sonship claimed for the angels.

***“And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship Him”*** (Hebrews 1:6). On that Last Day, that great day of judgment, He will stand as “the firstborn,” first in rank and position, as all the angels bow down before Him in worship.

Today, ***“in these last days”*** God continues to speak to us by His Son through apostolic ministry and through His priesthood of all believers. Jesus sent out His apostles to speak His Word. Pastors are called and ordained to speak what Jesus says. You are called to speak the Christmas message to your friends, your family, your neighbor ***“for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”*** (Luke 2:11). Jesus has come to save you and me from the power of sin, death, and the devil. He has come to undertake the Great Exchange as He put on our human frame, and in return He gives us redemption, His glory, and His name. ***“For while we were still sinners Christ died for us”*** (Romans 5:8). In Christ alone, we are reconciled to God through His death.

When God speaks in Holy Baptism, we receive His name and with it everything that belongs to Jesus, including His life that conquers death. When God speaks through pastors and yourselves who say what Jesus says, forgiving one another in His name, we are forgiven. When God speaks ***“this is My body; this is My blood,”*** the incarnate Christ’s body and blood are truly present in the Lord’s Supper. When you hear, ***“The peace of the Lord be with you always,”*** the Lord’s peace rests upon you. This is the same peace the angels proclaimed at His birth.

On this Christmas Day, we see the supremacy of Jesus. We see the radiance of His glory as the exact imprint of God. Through His coming, we have received the Greatest Gift – which is salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. For there is no greater gift than forgiveness, life and salvation! Merry Christmas! Amen!

*The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.*

**+ SOLI DEO GLORIA +**