

Christmas Day

IN THE BEGINNING

John 1:1-14

Christmas Day

Analysis by Paige G. Evers

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it._6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world._10He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God._14And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

DIAGNOSIS: Christmas is Over

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Done with Celebrating*

In the beginning on Christmas Day was the gift exchange. In the beginning on Christmas Day was the elaborate dinner at Grandma's house. In the beginning on Christmas Day was the sigh of relief that "I got everything done and thank God now Christmas is over." In their rush to put Christmas aside and get back to normal life, those who are born of blood (v. 13), or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man (that is, all of us) fail to realize that with the baby in the manger, God is just getting started.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : Celebrating Ourselves

Even if we go back to John's message for Christmas Day: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (v. 1), there's no guarantee that us over-fed, over-gifted, over-partied sinners will hear it. We're focused on what we do and what we create. How could anything have begun before we came along? We don't have room in our hearts to accept, let alone trust, the one who created us and the world in which we live (vv. 10-11).

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : Nothing to Celebrate

Without trust in the Word, we are without God. "Without [the Word] not one thing came into being" (v. 3). Without trust in Jesus, all we have is our sins. We can't stand before God and expect to survive God's judgment. On our own, we don't really have life. It's as if we never had a beginning, never came into being, at all. In God's eyes, we are as good as dead.

PROGNOSIS: God's New Beginning

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : New Life in Jesus

But by God's grace, we are not left to face our Creator alone. The Word, Jesus, became flesh and lived among us (v. 14). He was crucified for us. He was raised to new life ahead of us. God took on our flesh in his Son to rid us of sin and make us new.

On Christmas Day, the baby in the manger is a flesh-and-blood reminder of the fullness and depth of God's love for sinners. In the light of Christmas morning, sinners can rejoice that in this newborn child, the Son of God, the true light has come (v. 9). In Christ, God gives us new beginning with him and the world.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : Celebrating our Savior

This good news, heralded by the infant's cry from the stable, is the only thing that can arouse us from our "holiday season" stupor. God's mercy shown to us in the coming of God's Son awakens our hearts to trust in someone other than ourselves. And by accepting him (v. 11) and believing in his name, Jesus gives us the power to become children of God (v. 12). That's a power that no Internet shopping site can deliver and no amount of money can buy. It can only be given by grace and received by faith in the Giver.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : Sharing the Celebration

On Christmas morning, God gives us a new calling. The world may think that Christmas is finally "over," but the forgiven sinner knows that his new life as a child of God is just beginning. What better model for that new life than John. He was also sent by God as a witness to testify to the Son of God, the Word made flesh, the light of the world (v. 6). Like John, we know that we are not the light (v. 8). But we do know how the light has illuminated the dark places in our lives. God calls us to testify about the Word that became flesh and that fills our lives with grace and truth. In the beginning on the day AFTER Christmas is you, sharing the joy of being a child of God and inviting those in darkness to bask in the Son's light.