

**Rev. Mike Cole**  
**Providence Presbyterian Church**  
**Second Sunday after Christmas**  
**January 4, 2026**  
**Colossians 1:15-20; John 1:1-9**

**"In the Beginning"**

I'm sure you know the answer to this Bible question: Where in the Bible is baseball mentioned? In the Big Inning! Today, we're going to talk about beginnings – actually I'm going to talk about beginnings and I hope you will listen.

How many birth days does the average person have? Just one. We all know our beginnings – our birth day, our family of origin, our lineage and our racial or ethnic heritage. We have documentation to prove our beginnings. Folks who are into genealogy spend countless hours researching and confirming their family's beginnings.

But today we are going to examine Jesus' beginnings and what they mean for us. I say "they" because Jesus doesn't have just one beginning. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, born in Bethlehem. We go to great lengths to focus on the baby Jesus - reminding the children that he is the reason for the season - setting up creches (both small, life-size, and live) - and singing favorite carols like "Away In a Manger." But the fact is that while Jesus was born on Christmas Day, Christ wasn't "born" on Christmas Day, or any other day, for that matter. Christ wasn't "born" at all.

John, the gospel writer says it this way: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The church has traditionally capitalized the "W" in "Word," in this passage to indicate our belief that Jesus Christ is the capital "W" "Word." In other words, we could just as easily read, "In the beginning was Christ, and Christ was with God, and Christ was God." John is talking about Christ before Bethlehem, before he was born, before we knew him. The one we know as Jesus, preexisted. Christ was with God before he was with us.

Have you ever pondered that? As William Willimon says, "One reason why I have never really thought about the preexistence of Christ is that Christ gave us enough to deal with in his earthly ministry, and I felt no need to go rummaging around in some weird notion of preexistence for more of Christ to think about. Just give me Jesus beginning at Bethlehem, and I have enough on my plate."

Some would say that we have enough problems with the credibility of Christianity, what with Jesus turning water into wine, walking on water, making the blind to see, and rising from death, without adding one more weird notion to the list of Christian beliefs that modern people find hard to swallow.

Even though the preexistence of Christ is a strange notion for us, it is an ancient, time-honored, biblical concept, over which people have fought and died. St. Paul said, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created... He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:15, 17) Paul means preexistence.

Christ was with God even before Genesis. When Genesis says that God began creating worlds and creatures, Christ was creating with him. Later, when it says that God made a covenant with Abraham to bless his descendants, Christ was covenanting with Him. The One who saves us is the same One who helped create and covenant with us. The world, God's world, in all its beauty and complexity truly is Jesus' world because Jesus Christ is God. As God, Jesus is Lord over all. Everything that has been, is or will be is under Christ's domain.

Have you ever noticed how some people are prone to attribute tragedy to God? "Acts of God," are what the insurance companies call them. Sometimes even our neighbors, meaning well, will say something like, "Well, we must just accept this as God's will." But if John is right (and the church says he is) then those folks might just as well say, "Well, it's Jesus' will." Whoa! That sounds a whole lot different, doesn't it? It's hard to imagine an insurance company saying after a hurricane or flood, that "this was an act of Christ." This puts things in a different perspective, I think.

It was this Christ, the One who was with God from the beginning, up there, out there, or wherever you think that God dwells, who came to us. And that makes a difference. What John is saying, I think, is that the relationship between us and Jesus is not only a cozy, intimate, loving thing; It is also big, cosmic and eternal. It began before we got here - before anything got here.

What God is doing in Christ began long before my small life or yours took form. When Christ empties himself, takes on our human form, and stands with us, it is no less than God - the creator of the universe, the painter of the stars, the shaper of humpback whales - who stands with us. And that makes a difference, even though we can't fully understand it.

We can understand how a good person makes sacrifices - we've seen the Ghandis and Mother Teresa's enough to know that that does happen. But how are we to understand that the great, almighty God came down to be with us, to be born as we are born, to suffer as we sometimes suffer, to die as we die? We can't comprehend it.

But when we suffer or confront the tragedies this life sends our way, it makes a difference to know that God has come to suffer with us. Furthermore, God didn't just come down from glory to mix it up with us for a while and stand beside us in weak resignation to the tragic circumstances of life. Christ also returned to the glory from which he came. Having embraced the world he helped create, Christ returned to sit beside the creator, to rule.

In Christ we have one who has been both here and there and done that. Because Christ was in the beginning, Christ has the power to address tragic circumstances with love and compassion. Because Christ was in the beginning, when Christ offers both body and blood to us, it makes a difference. Because Christ was in the beginning, we are assured that Christ will be with us to the end because as God, Christ exists there also. Because Christ was in the beginning and is also in the now and at the end, we can trust Christ to get us through whatever we are facing. All because Christ, the capital "W" Word was in the beginning. And that's the beginning point for us.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**The Charge: Wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God will equip you. God will accomplish a purpose in your being where you are. Christ who dwells within you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in God's grace, love and power. Amen**