

# CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 04 January 2015

Te Rātapu Tuarua i muri i te Rā Whānautanga / 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

## JESUS, THE WORD OF GOD



### IN THE BEGINNING WORD

JOHN 1:1-18

"In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God."

- John 1:1

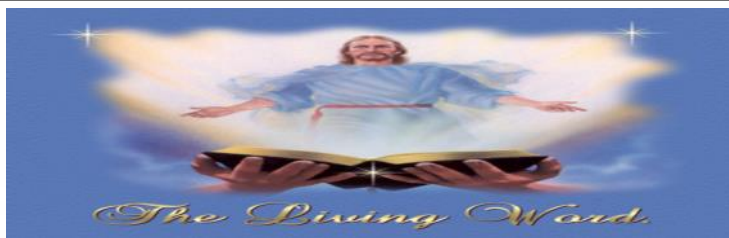
## JESUS, THE WORD OF GOD

### SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves (Ephesians 1:5-6).

### COLLECT OF THE DAY – *Let us pray:*

All praise to you, almighty God and heavenly king, who sent your Son into the world to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: grant that through the telling of the Christmas story we may be born again in him, so he may continually dwell in us and reign on earth as he reigns in heaven, now and for ever. **Amen.**



## Captured Fire

The Sunday Homilies



## Jesus, the Word of God

On this the last Sunday of Christmas we look again at the real meaning of Christmas. Many of the things that we do at Christmas time are non-Christian things, but the gospel passage for today from John 1 brings us back to the real meaning of Christmas. In verses 1 and 2 of this passage we are introduced to a person called the Word whom we know from verse 14 to be the

only Son of God the Father. These first two verses tell us that the Word, that is, the Son of God has always existed. So he is eternal. He always has been and he always will be. Before there was anything else, there was the Word. Jesus had his birth in Bethlehem, but not his beginning.

Verses 1 and 2 also tell us that Jesus is God's equal. And then verse 1 says " ... *and the Word was God.*" So this clearly tells us that Jesus was God. So when God sent his Son into this world, he sent One who was eternally, equally and essentially God. So that when Jesus was born into this world, God in human form had come into this world. In this world, every word he said, every deed he did and every miracle he performed confirmed him to be God. He alone is the person of Christmas.

But why did God put on human form and walk among men? Why did he come into this world to live and to die? What is the purpose of Christmas? Jesus was born into a world of people who lived in the darkness of sin, all over the world. Sin is the act of not doing what God requires or doing what according to God should not be done, in thought, word, or deed. When Jesus was born into the evil of this world, he came to be the Saviour to save sinners from the sin that had separated people from God. In order to save sinners from the sin that had separated people from God, he took the punishment due to us for our sin against God upon himself, by dying in our place, and paying the death penalty due to us for our sin. This was his main purpose in coming into this world in human form.

Along with this main purpose Jesus came to be the Word of God, that is, the total Message From God—everything that God wanted to communicate to man. Jesus as the Word of God came to tell mankind that there was a way to come to God the Father and to experience eternal life. He came to tell us that anyone who will come to him to put trust in him by doing as he says and receive him into their heart and life will experience the new birth (Jn. 1:12-13) and will enter into eternal life (Eph. 1:13-14).

Those who hear what Jesus, the Word of God, says and respond positively in this way will receive many spiritual blessings which include God's love, care, forgiveness and presence with them. They will experience good and peaceful times (Jer. 31:12). They will also receive many physical blessings and not be in need (Jer. 31:14).

This is the real meaning of Christmas. This is the Christmas message. By accepting that the Christ of Christmas came to be *your* Saviour from sin, and by inviting the risen and living Christ into your heart and putting your life into his care in obedience to him as Lord, you may have **eternal life - eternal life.**

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



## The Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 31:7 - 14

*A reading from Jeremiah chapter 31 beginning at verse 7.*

<sup>7</sup> The LORD says, “Sing for joy because the people of Jacob are blessed. Shout because the LORD has made them the greatest nation. Make your praises heard. Say, ‘LORD, save your people. Save the people who are left alive in Israel.’ <sup>8</sup> I will bring them from the land of the north. I will gather them from one end of the earth to the other. Even those who are blind and those who can’t walk will be among them. Pregnant women and women having their babies will be among them also. Many of them will return. <sup>9</sup> Their eyes will be filled with tears as they come. They will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water. I will lead them on a level path where they will not trip or fall. I am Israel’s father. And Ephraim is my oldest son.

<sup>10</sup> “Listen to my message, you nations. Announce it on shores far away. Say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather them. He will watch over his flock like a shepherd.’ <sup>11</sup> I will set the people of Jacob free. I will save them from those who are stronger than they are. <sup>12</sup> They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion. They will be joyful because of everything I give them. I give them grain, olive oil and fresh wine. I give them the young animals in their flocks and herds. Israel will be like a garden that has plenty of water. And they will not be sad anymore. <sup>13</sup> Then young women will dance and be glad. And so will the men, young and old alike. I will turn their mourning into gladness. I will comfort them. And I will give them joy instead of sorrow. <sup>14</sup> I will satisfy the priests. I will give them more than enough. And my people will be filled with the good things I give them,” announces the LORD.

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.*



## The Epistle Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

*A reading from Ephesians chapter 1 beginning at verse 3.*

### **Praise God for His Spiritual Blessings in Christ**

<sup>3</sup> Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ. <sup>4</sup> God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. <sup>5</sup> So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. <sup>6</sup> All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God’s grace is so rich. <sup>8</sup> He poured his grace on us. By giving us great wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. <sup>10</sup> It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

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<sup>11</sup> We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. <sup>12</sup> We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory. <sup>13</sup> You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all his people completely free. All these things will bring praise to his glory.

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.*

## **The Gospel Reading: John 1:(1-9), 10-18**

*The Holy Gospel according to John chapter 1 beginning at verse 10. Praise and Glory to God.*

<sup>10</sup> The Word was in the world. And the world was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> Some people did accept him and did believe in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup> To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> John was a witness about the Word. John cried out and said, "This was the one I was talking about. I said, 'He who comes after me is more important than I am. He is more important because he existed before I was born.'" <sup>16</sup> God is full of grace. From him we have all received grace in place of the grace already given.

<sup>17</sup> In the past, God gave us grace through the law of Moses. Now, grace and truth come to us through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. But the One and Only is God and is at the Father's side. The one at the Father's side has shown us what God is like.

*This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.*



**KURA RAUMATI: TUES., 13 JAN. TO SUN., 18 JAN., 2015.**

[Tutors at the kura will include Bishop John, Mike Hawke, Matanuku Kaa, Tamer Elnady, Andrew Starkey, Anne Candy, Nyree Bowen Lilley, Jeanette King, Valerie François, Yoko Matsumoto and Sue Bagshaw].

**HUI AMORANGI AGM 2015: FRI., 13 MAR. - SUN., 15 MAR., 2015.**