

Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL

CONSIDER HIM

How small we have become.

How small our outlook has become.

How small we have made the Son of God in our aspect.

Consider...

BACK UP FOR A MOMENT AND TAKE IN A WIDER VIEW. Put down your smart phone, set aside your social media. Step away from all those within-reach things you think are so critically important to your life and, just for a few moments, dwell within your intellect and imagination. In your mind send yourself off to a point outside not just your personal worldview, but outside the bullet-train course of time itself.

Don't think about today, or tomorrow. Don't think about who you are meeting for lunch, or what to feed the kids for supper. Don't think about how you feel about your boss, or how much you would like a new car. Detach yourself from all of it, as if you are floating free in space looking down on the entirety of this blue planet. Now, consider:

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.
His goings forth are from everlasting,
From the ancient days.”

Micah 5:2

The Son of God was born in flesh in Bethlehem and named Jesus. This was His earthly birth, but it was not His beginning. The Son of God is “from the days of eternity.” Before that blue ball floating at your feet even existed—before anything existed—there was the Son of God, second member of the triune Godhead.

We call Him Jesus the Christ.

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:15–16

The Son of God created everything there is—that silvery blue ball floating beneath you, all the stars and planets, the soil, the oceans, babies, squirrels, mountains, even smart phones. It is all of His genius, and all He did was speak it into existence.

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.

Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the expanse of the heavens.”

Genesis 1:3, 9, 20

Since you are now floating in space, and detached from time itself, let your mind fast-forward many thousands of years from the first week of creation to an epic day in a village in Judah.

The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:35

There He is again, and the apostle John gives us another name for the Son of God, for Jesus the Christ, born in Bethlehem: “the Word.”



And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

The Son of God spoke the universe into existence, and when He became flesh—once He became Jesus the Christ—He is called “the Word” (*logos*), because He is, in His being, the speaking expression of God in flesh.

As God in flesh, the One who created all that is, the One who created human beings of all nations, all colors, all creeds—this One offered Himself as a sacrifice for all their sins. His death and resurrection became the center-point of all history. Prior to that, Father God and man had one kind of relationship; after, God and man had another.

All because of Jesus the Christ.

Once more let your mind roam further into the ether of time/space and consider one more moment in time, this one not in the past, but a moment yet future.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on

His head are many diadems; having a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself, and being clothed with a garment dipped in blood, His name is also called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the wrath of the rage of God, the Almighty. And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Revelation 19:11–16

And on the day when The Word plants His feet once again on earthly soil He will slay the foul beast who has enjoyed dominion over all the earth for three-and-a-half years, who has erected his own image in the Jerusalem temple and forced all of mankind to worship him as god. This servant of Satan will be slain by Christ Jesus using the only weapon He requires—the same with which He long before created everything in the universe: His mouth. ✦

Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

All in All

YOU ARE FREE TO BELIEVE IN A SMALL GOD. You are free to believe whatever you like about Jesus the Christ. You are free to continue thinking of Him as a benign, shrinking milque-toast, a flower-child invention of sappy love and sweetness. You are free to consider Him real, but dated: a Savior who knows little of today. You are free to think He is utterly disconnected from material life, someone reserved for Sunday School flannel graphs and nursery-rhyme songs. You are free to dismiss Him as little more than a fairy tale.

Christ Jesus, Son of God, is not just a teacher, not just a prophet, not just a nice guy. Remarkably, He also is not just a Savior. Jesus is indeed all of these, but He is far, far more.

He is cosmic.

With the same supernatural power with which He spoke the universe into existence—His words alone—Jesus holds up, sustains, bears everything He made. Is there an order to the universe? There is, because Jesus keeps it in order. Are there physical laws that govern the seasons, the tides, the ris-

ing and setting of the moon? There are, because Jesus spoke them into existence and maintains them.

Don't get lost in the Nativity. It was important for the Son of God to come in flesh, for only then could He be sacrificed for our sin. It was important for Him to walk this earth as one of us, for only then could He reveal to man the true nature of the Father. It was important for Him to experience flesh and dwell on earth, so He could be a merciful brother to the people of His creation. But never forget that the little one born to the maiden created the world to which He came. Never forget that He created time itself, and the thread of history into which He was born. And never, ever forget that the tiny helpless baby of the manger is the Lord and ruling King of all that is. He is the one who holds it all together.

The Nativity is a tender moment expressing the love of God for man, but it pales against the moment that took hold of the entire universe and snapped it like the ragged tails of a cheap rug.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard

over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was God's Son!"

Matthew 27:50–54

The Son of God just died for mortal man! The story was flashed throughout the universe, and all creation quaked at the staggering truth. *He did it! He actually did it!* All of history came to a grinding halt in that cataclysmic moment. Then, a few days later, it restarted. Now it would have a different trajectory, man would have something it had never had before: both a Savior and the promise of resurrection.

All because of Jesus.

Because of who He is, because of what He did, is doing, will do.

Even now the Lamb of God sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father. We see God Almighty (if we dare at all to look upon Him with eyes of flesh) sitting straight, majestic, regal. But we see the Son (and we cannot help but look upon our glorious Savior) sitting not straight, but leaning, always leaning toward the Father as He intercedes for those in His body, the church. The Son leans toward the Father, whispering, "He is Mine. She is Mine."

And the Father nods, acknowledging. ✦



Worthy the Lamb

Let my cry of lamentation come near before You, O Yahweh;
Give me understanding according to Your word.

Psalm 119:169

*I hesitate before the heavy, golden doors. Dare I enter?
It is true, I have been granted permission, but still... On the other side is He.
The One.*

THE ONE WHO GRANTED ME THE RIGHT TO ENTER IS THERE AS WELL. He, the Lamb, the Lion. Both attend to the prayers, the praise, the worship from myriad myriads.

The immense doors have the density of immovable granite beneath my hands, like the base of an ancient mountain. Who could ever hope to move them? Yet at my slightest effort they swing wide, and I find myself in the throne room of Almighty He.

My senses tell me there are others present, that within these crystalline precincts worship individuals just like me, numbered beyond any earthly measure, a sea of prostrate millions upon millions. I feel them, but I do not notice them. Nor do I notice the swirling cherubim, the encircling elders, and endless waves of angels ministering and worshiping. My waking eyes see only the Objects of their devotion and mine.

They sit upon thrones carved from Eternity itself. I see the thrones, and the staggering luminescent beauty in which they are placed. I see the face of the Lamb, and my heart breaks with unbounded joy as my feet begin moving toward Him on their own. Just by gazing upon His face—so different, yet so familiar—all the qualities that personify Him flood into my mind, audibly, as if the chorus that sur-

rounds me is singing them out in their praise: Grace, Kind, Forgiving, Gentle, Strong, King. All these are shouted between my ears until my unrestrained lips join in the chorus. All these and more are embodied in His visage. And every particle of my being shouts forth, “Worthy is the Lamb!”

My eyes resist leaving the face of the Lamb. but my eyes cannot bear the sight of He, Father God. Flesh—and I am still flesh—cannot survive His visage. It is fire; it is a holocaust. I know the face of my Lord, for He has inhabited flesh, but the face of my God is wreathed in fire and light, an unbearable Majesty. As I approach my gaze is downcast, submissively averted. He has told me in His word I can be here, in His very presence, but still...

The voice of the Spirit fills my mind, answering my unspoken prayer for permission to approach: *Take heart. Didn't I write, “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need”? Come boldly before the throne. Your cry will be heard.*

Obedying, I bow down before His footstool, His throne, and unburden my heart. ♦